

From the Persian Gulf to the Americas, from Korea to Kosovo, you are protecting the freedom so many Americans gave their lives for in this century and helping to build a safer world for the next century.

We ask a lot from our Armed Forces, and we owe you a lot in return, especially at a moment of such great challenge to our service men and women around the world. I am determined to work with Congress to give you the equipment and training you need and the pay and quality of life you deserve. The security you have given us supports our strong economy—

we must ensure that you and your families share its benefits. So on this Armed Forces Day, all Americans join me in gratitude for your service to our Nation.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 3:31 p.m. on May 14 in the library at the Rainier Club in Seattle, WA, for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 15. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on the Observance of Armed Forces Day, 1999 *May 15, 1999*

The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated in 1950, to acknowledge the debt all Americans owed to the courageous men and women who had fought a great war for freedom. Our nation has changed a great deal over the last half century, but our debt to the Armed Forces remains as great as ever. Each year, Armed Forces Day gives us an important chance to pause and remember the service and sacrifice that keeps our nation in the vanguard of freedom. On behalf of all Americans, I thank the men and women of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard for all they do to keep our nation strong and secure.

Today, the world's prayers are with the people suffering the horrors of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and with the brave Americans and allies coming to their aid. But Kosovo is only one of many places our armed forces are making a difference. From the Persian Gulf to the

Americas, from Korea to the Mediterranean, our men and women in uniform are superbly performing their mission: deterring war, protecting the freedom so many Americans gave their lives for in this century, and creating confidence that the next century will be more peaceful than the last.

Every time I meet with our servicemen and women, I am inspired by their patriotism, skill, and selfless dedication to the ideals that make this nation great. America is proud of the greatest force for freedom the world has ever known.

On this Armed Forces Day, all Americans join me in gratitude for their service to our nation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial and Congressional Campaign Committees Dinner in Beverly Hills, California *May 15, 1999*

I have never before had the honor of being the warmup act for Andrea Bocelli, but I will. I will do my best. *[Laughter]* I want to—and if I sing a little, you will just have to—*[laughter]*. I want to say first of all how grateful I am

to all of you for being here, especially to the chairs and the cochairs of the dinner and, of course, to David and Steven and Jeffrey. I want to thank my leaders, Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt. I was looking at them up